

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
841 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

SUBJECT: Marjol Battery Site
Throop, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
Trip Report
FROM: Michael R. Mason, Environmental Protection Specialist
CERCLA Removal Enforcement Section (3HW14)
TO: File
THRU: Mary Letzkus, Chief
CERCLA Removal Enforcement Section (3HW14)

DATE: MAY 1 1987

Background

The Marjol Battery Site is located on Delaware Street in Throop, Lackawanna County, PA. The site is located in a predominantly residential area with approximately 5500 people living within one mile of the site. The Marjol Battery and Equipment Company, formerly owned by Larry Fiegelman, was a battery crushing and lead processing facility operating from 1968 to 1980. At the rear of the property an area of approximately 45 acres was utilized as an unpermitted landfill. Also, industrial acid wastes and lead-contaminated surface runoff were discharged into a wet-weather ditch which eventually drains into the Lackawanna River.

In 1975, the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") conducted a survey of people in Throop to determine the degree of lead absorption in body tissue. They concluded that the Marjol Battery operation was responsible for increased lead absorption in children residing close to the site. In 1977, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and CDC determined that 30 children had elevated blood lead levels.

Soil samples taken in 1979 and 1980 from unpaved areas on the Marjol site revealed a total lead concentration ranging from 0.31% to 20.34%. The most recent samples were taken in 1985 by PADER and the results are listed as follows:

<u>SAMPLE LOCATION</u>	<u>Pb (ppm)</u>
Hill Street (off-site)	1,490
Woodlawn Street	72
River Sediment	455
Erosion Clearing	14,129
Erosion Ditch	43,299
Base of Landfill	3,243
Landfill	1,648
Landfill	213,440
Background	< 12

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In 1980, Gould, Inc. purchased the site from Mr. Fiegelman, but they never utilized the site as planned. As a result, operations were shut down. Gould removed lead sludge and tanks located in a pretreatment building onsite in 1984. However, they have never proposed to clean up the illegal landfill.

State Action to Date

PADER has been involved in several enforcement actions over the past eighteen years. In 1969, PADER Bureau of Air Quality and Control issued an abatement order to the facility to reduce the lead emissions from the active portion of the plant. In 1976, PADER issued an Administrative Order to further reduce the lead emissions from the plant. PADER issued another order to the facility in 1980 to reduce the concentration of lead in the air and soil of the plant. Since Marjol Battery stopped operating in 1981, PADER has attempted to force Gould, Inc. to clean up various portions of the plant. Over the past two years, Gould has voluntarily removed lead and acidic based sludge from a pretreatment building, demolished two buildings, and stabilized a portion of the landfill by covering any exposed battery casings.

PRP Search and Site Visit - May 8, 1987

I arrived at the PADER Wilkes-Barre Regional Office at 10:30 a.m. on May 8, 1987, and met with Reno Ducceschi, DER Regional Project Officer for the Marjol Battery site. After a cursory review of the state file and a request that all designated documents be copied and forwarded to the Region III office, Mr. Ducceschi and I drove to the site in Throop, PA. The site is secured against vehicular entry with locked gates. However, no fence was present to restrict entry by foot and evidence of unauthorized entry was noted. Presently, the Throop Municipal Authority maintains city vehicles at the site and provides minimal security for 16 hours per day.

During the site visit, Ducceschi and I walked the perimeter of the landfill. The size of the landfill is about 45 acres and contains approximately 65,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil, broken battery casings and crushed drums. Starting in the middle of the landfill and extending along the western perimeter of the site for about 1000 feet is a 10 foot deep erosion channel which drains into the Lackawanna River. Battery casings and lead pieces were evident throughout the length of this drainage ditch, apparently carried there by large volumes of water during runoff. In areas where the runoff has eroded away portions of the landfill, piles of casing and lead pieces are exposed to further air and water erosion. PADER soil and sediment samples obtained at the ditch-river juncture, about 1,000 feet from the landfill, indicated elevated levels of lead (50-100 ppm).

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About a half dozen homes line the drainage channel at the point where the channel meets the Lackawanna River. Dirt bike tracks adjacent to the channel indicates that the area is commonly used by neighborhood children for recreation. There are no water intakes on the Lackawanna River; however, it is a popular site for local fishermen. The closest water intake is on the Susquehanna River in Danville.

Almost the entire population within the 3-mile radius of the site is serviced by two public water supply sources or reservoirs, located 3 and 2.8 miles southeast of the site. These reservoirs do not receive any surface drainage from the Marjol Battery Site. In addition to the public supply, it is estimated that 155 people utilize downsite wells for a water supply.

After leaving the site, I conducted a deed search at the Lackawanna Court House in Scranton. Deed records appear to indicate that Gould, Inc. has had title to the property since 1980.

Future Action

CERCLA 104(e) letters have been sent to the past and present owners/operators of the site. CRES has requested that ORC assign an attorney to the site. Within the next several weeks, an effort will be made to negotiate with Gould, Inc. on the terms of a Consent Order to stabilize the site and control offsite migration of contaminants.

Jerry Saseen, the OSC for the site, is drafting the 10-point document. Saseen estimated that it may be three to four weeks before the 10-point is finalized for concurrence. Site Investigation is considering ranking the site for the NPL. Early indications are that the site may not rank due to lack of groundwater usage in the area and inadequate air sampling data. There is a possibility, however, that if the site is ranked under the new model it could make the NPL based on the direct contact threat alone.

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Marjol Meeting Participants

Environmental Protection Agency

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Gould, Inc. and Consultants

Citizens and Consultants

Throop Borough Council

Elected Officials or Staff:

U.S. Sen. John Heinz
U.S. Cong. Joseph McDade
State Sen. Robert Mellow

U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter
State Rep. Edward Stabeck

PA Dept. of Environmental Resources

PA Dept. of Health

PA Dept. of Community Affairs

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NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE #
WALTER BUCKMAN	U.S. SENATOR SPECTER (717)	346-2006
Ronald G. Masitis	Dist. Exec. Dir. PA DOTH	717-826-2063
JAMES M. Fox, M.D.	PA DOTH	717-787-1705
JAMES N. LOGUE, D.D.P.H.	PA DOTH	717-787-1705
C. ROSS LIVINGSTONE	CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PROF.	(717) 825-7971
GARY FROST	STATE Dept. of Health	717-787-1783
George E. Gontow	THROOP COUNCIL	717-489-5324
Walter M. Foster	Rep. ALN MAZAK THROOP COUNCIL	(717) 489-3324
Elizabeth Schach	THROOP Prop. Comm. H.E.L.P.	717-489-1894
John Kubasko	Sec. T.P.O.A.	717-383-0080
SHARON Soltis	Representing Resident Food Sols T.P.O.A.	717-489-6201
MARY ANN RICHARDSON	H.E.L.P. U. Pres.	717-489-6502
Mark Mazak	Throop Council	717-489-8311
Tom Hutzler	City - H.E.L.P.	(717) 961-1616
James H. Deemer	Adv. - H.E.L.P.	717 587-0188
Barry Beemer	Lawyer - H.E.L.P.	717 587-0188
REP. ED STABACK	115 M	717 876-1111
DAVE CROWNOVER	DER	717-783-7816
Rosanne Mistretta	EPH-ORC	215-517-8069
FRANK PUCCESCHI	PADER	717-826-2516
Kate Crowley	PADER	717-826-2516
TOM BROWNING	Representing Sen. Mallow	717-489-0336
MICHAEL KUSHNER	"	"
PAUL D. CAGGIAMANI	G.E.M.	717-489-4387
WAGNER KENNEISEN	GOULD	215 523 4470
MICHAEL C. VEYSEY	GOULD	312-640-4716
BARBARA FORSLUND	NTH/RUSSELL	215 524 2300
MARIE F. GROSETTI	HELP	71
ANDREW BARRAN	HELP	717-383-2583

NAME ATTENTION

PHONE

Gene Stoltz	Pres H.E.L.P.	(717) 489-5700
Dr Richard L. Brunner	USEPA Reg III	(215) 597-0804
Nick Lillards	ATSDR	(215) 597-3154
W. M. Lichtwald	ATSDR	
Mrs Fountain	Sen. John Heinz	(215) 592-9914
Daniel Ryan	U.S. EPA Region III	(215) 597-9816
John Ormasa	Cong. Joseph McDade	(202) 225-3731
Tony Pinto	Calade Env Mgmt	(717) 489-4387
Dan Daily	NTH/Russell Assoc	(215) 524-2300
David Johns	Gilman Env Mgmt	(717) 489-4387
John Hunsore	Sar. Jones	348-9131
Errence Shannon	Synergist, Inc.	215-286-5919
Bruce Smith	EPA Env.	215-597-1720
Alan G. Carlinz	PA DCA	717-963-4122
Bill Stenterike	EPA Env. office	(215) 597-6678
"	"	(717) 383-9313
John T. Ormasa	U.S. Rep. McDade	202 225-3731
Bill Zacher	EPA	(215) 597-6180

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